

# The Abyssinian Baptist Church

## Tourist Policy

### Welcome Statement

We are blessed that you are considering worshipping with us at The Abyssinian Baptist Church!

Named for our Holy Land, Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia), The Abyssinian Baptist Church was established in 1808 by a group of Ethiopian merchants and free Black Americans. Founded only 32 years after the establishment of the United States of America, The Abyssinian Baptist Church in the City of New York, Inc. celebrated its Bicentennial in 2008. We are the oldest Christian fellowship of African American Baptists in the State of New York, and one of the oldest black Baptist churches in the nation.

The Abyssinian Baptist Church values its history as a Christian institution born out of rebellion against racial discrimination, and its commitment to social justice for all. We believe that the church is a house of prayer for all people. Worship at The Abyssinian Baptist Church **IS NOT A GOSPEL PERFORMANCE** or entertainment of any kind. Worship is a sacred opportunity to draw closer to God through Jesus Christ. All are welcome to worship with us at The Abyssinian Baptist Church.

### General Guidelines

- The Abyssinian Baptist Church is not aligned with any third-party Tour Companies. **THERE IS NO FEE TO WORSHIP AT THE ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH.**
- Tourists are welcome to the 11am Worship Service ONLY.
- Due to spatial constraints, **NO TOURISTS WILL BE ADMITTED** to the 9am Worship Service.
- Because of high-volume tourism, **ALL** tourists must proceed to the “Tourist Entry Point” located on the Southeast corner of West 138<sup>th</sup> Street & Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd. for entry into The Abyssinian Baptist Church. **ADMITTANCE IS NOT GUARANTEED.**
- Tourists wearing Tank Tops, Flip-Flops, and/or Shorts **WILL NOT BE** allowed to enter the Abyssinian Sanctuary. Women and men are required to cover their shoulders upon entering the church.
- Note that the “Tourist Entry Point” is an outdoor location. Tourists should be prepared to stand for a significant period of time and tolerate inclement weather.
- Based on available Sanctuary seating, tourists will be admitted to the 11am Worship Service on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Tourists will **NOT** be admitted to the 11am Worship Service on the following days:

**Homecoming – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in September**  
**Men’s Day – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in October**  
**Christmas Day**  
**New Year’s Day**

**Women’s Day – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in March**  
**Palm Sunday**  
**Easter Sunday**  
**Mother’s Day**

### Group Guidelines

- Seating is only reserved for School Groups, Church Groups, and/or Family Reunions.
- In order to request Reserved Group Seating, a representative from your School/Church Group, and/or Family Reunion **MUST** contact our Communications Office (212.862.7474 ext. 216 or [esimpson@abyssinian.org](mailto:esimpson@abyssinian.org)) **at least two (2) weeks in advance of your visit.**
- Based on available Sanctuary seating, a Confirmation Letter will be forwarded to your group/organization. Upon the entire group’s arrival at the church, this Letter must be presented to an Abyssinian usher/representative who will ensure your timely seating.
- School/Church Groups and/or Family Reunions of ten (10) or more who have confirmed Reserved Group Seating **SHOULD NOT** proceed to the “Tourist Entry Point.”

## FAQ

- **Is there any possibility that my group can be accommodated at the 9am Worship Service?**  
No. Tourists are welcome to the 11am Worship Service ONLY.
- **Is there a Dress Code?**  
Yes. Worship is sacred. Tourists wearing Tank Tops, Flip-Flops, and/or Shorts WILL NOT BE allowed to enter the Abyssinian Sanctuary. Women and men are required to cover their shoulders upon entering the church.
- **Can tourist groups of less than ten (10) people request Reserved Group Seating?**  
No. Only School/Church groups and/or Family Reunions of ten (10) or more may request Reserved Group Seating. Proof of your affiliation will be requested.
- **What if my School/Church group of ten (10) or more does not request Reserved Group Seating two weeks in advance?**  
Your group is welcome to proceed to the "Tourist Entry Point" located on the Southeast corner of West 138<sup>th</sup> Street & Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Blvd. for entry into The Abyssinian Baptist Church. *ADMITTANCE AND GROUP SEATING IS NOT GUARANTEED.*
- **How long does the 11am Worship Service last?**  
Tourists should plan to be in worship for approximately 2 ½ hours. *Once seated in the Sanctuary, tourists are expected to remain seated until worship has concluded.*
- **Are photos and audio/video recordings allowed?**  
No. Worship is sacred in the Abyssinian community. Photos and audio/video recordings are not permitted in the Sanctuary. However, CD's of sermons are available for purchase in the Abyssinian Bookstore.
- **What if I have additional questions or concerns?**  
Contact the Abyssinian Communications Office at 212.862.7474 ext.216 or [esimpson@abyssinian.org](mailto:esimpson@abyssinian.org).